

Local Watershed Council Activity Reports

Taken from: RI Rivers Council Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2017

Narrow River Preservation Association – as reported by Richard Grant:

December/January are months when we check our schedules for the coming year, finish our membership drive with the second mailing and handle any new projects.

The Red Shack on Narrow River, which was falling apart and recently taken down will be highlighted in our Winter Newsletter. National Fish and Wildlife have agreed to pay for a historical sign to be designed by NRPA.

Financial items of State Grants, Town Grants, Family Foundation Grants, Membership Drive, The RI Foundation endowment program, have been reviewed and incorporated with new thrust for fundraising such as Key Sponsor for Road Race, Swim and Paddle events with the addition of poster mailing to Health Clubs, Real Estate and Manufacturing corporations.

Discussions concerning Science Fair and College Scholarship programs, BMP (detention pond) program, River Clean up plans, Friends of Canonchet Farm representative, Narrow River Bike Path update, South Side of Sprague Bridge Park, Land and Summit representation and display, and the Pettaquamscutt Winter Series were noted in the NRPA monthly meeting.

Details of many of the above mentioned items will be detailed in the Winter Newsletter.

www.narrowriver.org

Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council as reported by Mr. Horbert:

We have received reimbursement through the grant we received from RIDEM for the Randall Pond project, and have used it to repay the bridge loan that we received from Centerville Bank.

We also received an extension on our grant from NEIWPC for the Fish Passage Study on Blackamore and Cranberry Ponds. The study has been completed, and we expect the report from ESS by the end of January.

We have been approached by a local developer to determine if we have any interest in river-front property in Scituate that, should their project go forward and they gain ownership of the parcels (which are currently in receivership) they may look to donate or sell to us. We have sent a letter of interest identifying specific parcels we would be interested in. If the project goes forward and we can negotiate transfer of some or all of these parcels we would be able to significantly increase recreational opportunities on the North Branch Pawtuxet River.

We are still investigating a potential ownership dispute near our property at the former Pawtuxet Falls Dam. It appears that a sign for a nearby business may be partially or completely on property we own. We are trying to work with the City of Warwick to confirm the location of the sign and potentially work with the City to have the offending landowner remove it without the need to pay for a full property survey to prove our ownership. This site has been targeted for some cleanup and improvements as well as installation of interpretive signage.

We have been working with the Warwick Conservation Commission to aid them in placing several new wood duck boxes within the watershed.

We will be developing an aggressive schedule of cleanups this spring, including both properties we own as well as a couple other major cleanups in the watershed. We will also be hosting a couple fishing tournaments.

A committee is meeting to help us improve fundraising efforts as well as communication with residents of the watershed, especially to better utilize volunteer manpower for our projects.

We will be sending several members to attend the Land and Water Summit at URI this March. <http://www.pawtuxet.org/>

Salt Ponds Coalition – as reported by Ms. Eichinger –

Currently, we are a part of the Post-Sandy Resiliency Grant Team along with CRMC, DEM, the towns of Charlestown and Westerly, Save the Bay and others. Currently, the dredging is underway in the Charlestown Breachway in Ninigret Pond, dredge material is being used to restore adjacent drowning marshes and nearby beaches affected by erosion. Completion of this work is expected at the end of this month. Planning for similar projects is underway for Quonochontaug and Winnapaug Ponds as well.

We are working with the Town of Charlestown to plan for our portion of work under an EPA grant that they were awarded in 2016. This grant analyzes the effectiveness of septic/de-nitrification systems being used in the area, and the effects of water quality. We will be testing water quality sites in Green Hill Pond, as well as developing educational materials.

We are also still working with a group of Green Hill Pond residents to address pollution issues in the pond. There will be a meeting this month to discuss next steps.

We are working to expand our outreach in 2017, both through increased membership and more outreach events. To this end, we are starting to look ahead to this spring and summer season. We will be working with the R.I. Shellfish Management Team at URI to promote a town hall focused on aquaculture. We are also going to start planning our own seminars, safaris, kayak trips, and other potential outreach events shortly. In 2016, we hosted multiple public safaris, seminars, kayak trips, and we spoke to different community groups. Our outreach was

well over 600 people for our in-person events this past year, and our outreach footprint was larger when you consider those that we reached through our newsletters, emails, and Facebook.

www.saltpondscoalition.org

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Ms. Torello:

Water Quality

Eight years ago, water quality was important enough to the State of RI that they supported 75% WPWA's water annual quality monitoring costs. Today, they provide no support whatsoever. Since then, the cost for WPWA to monitor water quality has risen to \$30,000. During this time WPWA searched nationally for a source of stable funding to offset the annual cost, to no avail.

Today WPWA is left with the question "Will WPWA continue its 29th year of Water Quality monitoring in the watershed in 2017?" Suspending the monitoring program would represent an enormous loss of valuable information to RI and CT who rely on the aquifer for drinking water and recreation. This is just one of many casualties resulting from a decade's worth of legislative cuts in RIRC funding. RI's state leaders have sent a clear and repetitive message to their constituents that they believe that protecting RI's rivers is not important to the quality of life of taxpayers and tourists.

Wild and Scenic River

Eleven towns in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed from both RI and CT have appointed representatives to serve on the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Committee. The committee has formed subcommittees to identify the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Beaver, Chipuxet, Queen, Green Falls, Shunock, Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers. A website with more information about the study will be up by the end of January 2017.

Flood Resilience and Management Plan (FRMP)

Wood-Pawcatuck Flood Resiliency Management Plan has created a technical report based on field work performed the year before. The report was presented at two public meetings for comments that will help guide writing the final report. This report, which should be completed by March 2017, will include specific recommendations for bridge, culvert and dam replacement or modifications, as well as green infrastructure projects that would help mitigate problems with flooding in the watershed. Each town will receive information and recommendations they can use for planning purposes.

RI Environmental Education Association

A WPWA staff member serves on the board of RIEEA, which is currently developing four initiatives that will strengthen environmental education in RI.

<http://www.wpwa.org/>

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – as reported by Tim O’Conner

Educational Programs: are well underway. Fish in the Classroom Elementary program and Environmental Leaders High School program will continue through June. River Adventures Middle School program and another elementary group will begin in March.

Manton Dam Pond Nature-Like Fishway: We completed construction and opened this new operational fishway in mid-December! In spring, planting will occur and we are very interested in fish counts.

Green Infrastructure: Projects include a showcase in Olneyville, Citizens Bank Plaza downtown, and Pleasant Valley Parkway Residential Retrofits

-Completed projects include Riverside Park rain garden and bioswale plantings, Red Shed Bike Shop green roof, rain garden at William D’Abate Elementary, and the rain box at One Neighborhood Builders’ property.

-In the Providence Pleasant Valley Stream neighborhood, we are doing site assessments for downspout disconnections and green infrastructure installations. Neighbors will help with installations at demonstration homes.

-The Green Infrastructure Coalition completed signage and communications strategy.

River Rangers: The greenway team tracked metrics on our cleanup activities, both Ranger daily rounds and Clean Days activities. Here are some metrics for 2016:

717 total volunteers have donated 2,787.5 hours, \$65,673.50 in in-kind time.

We’ve removed from the Greenway & River:

- 813 bags of litter
- 91.275 cubic yards bulky debris & general garbage
- 42 large tires
- 280 small tires (um - whoa!)
- 204 small graffiti tags removed (under 2 sq ft)
- 190 large graffiti tags removed (over 2 sq ft)

WRWC has been busy on the Greenway!

Upcoming Events: First Annual WRWC Cocktail Party – Thursday, March 2nd, 2017 at Skyline, the new restaurant at Water Place Park.

www.wrwc.org

Note: January 2017 Activity Reports were not available from:

- Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone
- Buckeye Brook Coalition
- Kickemuit River Council
- Friends of the Moshassuck
- Ten Mile River Watershed Council